

CRITERIA FOR LSTA TECHNOLOGY GRANTS

The Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) is a funding source for grants to libraries for technology, resource-sharing, services to persons having difficulty using a library, and service to those in underserved urban and rural communities. The purpose of these guidelines is to identify criteria for the library technology grants that will be awarded under LSTA by the California State Library.

For the purpose of the LSTA grant program in California, "library technology grants" are defined as funds awarded to libraries for planning and/or implementation of projects that rely upon technology to succeed. Funds are available for technologies that will enhance library services or promote resource sharing among libraries.

In preparing technology grant applications it is important for the applicant to define a service need associated with a target population. The needs assessment process should identify and characterize the target population and address how the application of technology will improve service to that population. The library should be able to identify quantitative and qualitative measures that will help evaluate the project and demonstrate its effectiveness.

In developing demonstration projects, lower priority will be given to research and development projects, including "bleeding edge" technologies, or technologies where standards have not been adopted. Higher priority projects should use technologies that are both replicable and sustainable and that utilize well-established technical standards for that particular application.

Lower priority is also given to projects that are more of an ongoing, operational local responsibility. Grant applications that request technology products and services that are normally associated with the routine ongoing needs of the library are given a low priority.

Libraries considering technology applications should also be aware of other programs. Under the Library of California, incentive grants are available to assist libraries in acquiring Z39.50 server software. The California Library Services Act provides funds for retrospective conversion projects for public libraries. Whenever possible, state funds should be used in preference to or in advance of federal funds, although some coordination of multiple funding sources is possible. For more information on these programs contact Mark Parker, Assistant Bureau Chief, tel. (916) 657-1892, or Ira Bray, (916) 653-0171, in the Library Development Services Bureau.

EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR TECHNOLOGY PROJECTS:

Collection analysis - Projects to catalog and/or digitize collections must include detailed information about the collections, including physical information such as format and number of items to be processed. Applications should also address the collections' relevance to California's history, society and culture, the uniqueness of the collection, the statewide significance to resource sharing, and the library's willingness to share them.

Retrospective conversion - In addition to the collection analysis, retrospective conversion projects must reflect a minimum 1:1 match with local dollars or in-kind equaling or exceeding the LSTA funds requested.

Continuation - Technology projects must have a strong continuation component to be competitive. The library must assume long-term responsibility for equipment and digital resources created by the project. Equipment must continue to be used for project purposes for at least five years, or the life of the equipment.

Detail - Applicants must identify the technology components needed to implement the project in sufficient detail so that an outside reviewer can understand what those elements are and how they will be used.

Standards - Technology applications should demonstrate that the applicant is familiar with standards and protocols that are generally associated with the type of project being proposed and that those standards have been addressed in the project's conception.

Technical Expertise - Applicants should demonstrate that they have, or can obtain, the technical expertise to implement and maintain their project, either with staff or through contract assistance.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR FISCAL YEAR 2000/2001 APPLICANTS:

- **DIGITIZATION PROJECTS:** Library Development Services is drafting standards for digitization projects. If you plan to submit a digitization proposal, please contact Mark Parker, (916) 657-1892, mparker@library.ca.gov, for further information.
- **AUTOMATION PROJECTS - PUBLIC LIBRARIES:** Limited funds for first time library automation projects (circulation, database, and online catalog) for eligible libraries may be available in this fiscal year. The general requirements are expected to include a 50% local match in real dollars, pre-conversion of the library's database to machine readable form, Z39.50 connectivity, a commitment to support ongoing costs, and economic need. If you plan to submit an automation proposal please contact Mark Parker, Assistant Bureau Chief, Library Development Services, (916) 657-1892, mparker@library.ca.gov, for further information.
- **COMPUTER TRAINING LABORATORIES - PUBLIC LIBRARIES:** A very low priority will be assigned to computer training laboratories for public libraries due to the advent of the Gates Library Initiative and the anticipated number of computer laboratories to be implemented under the Gates program.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS:

These are some basic concerns that applicants are encouraged to bear in mind when developing proposals.

- What will the technology achieve?
- Is the proposed technology the most appropriate means for achieving the project goal?
- Is the project feasible and will it work? Is the project cost-effective?
- How will the technology be kept current and how will it migrate to future generations after the conclusion of the grant-funded period?